

VZCZCXRO9432
RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHNC #0278/01 1170644
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 270644Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9807
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1436
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000278

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: CYPRUS: CODEL BERMAN DISCUSSES PROSPECTS FOR
CYPRUS SOLUTION

REF: NICOSIA 00256

Classified By: POL: J. Rhatigan, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Howard Berman on April 14 led a six-member Congressional delegation to Cyprus to discuss progress towards the island's reunification. In their meetings with Greek Cypriot (G/C) leaders, the Codel heard repeatedly that "the obstacle to a solution is Turkey, especially the military," and that while the talks were moving slowly, the G/Cs could not accept timetables and/or international arbitration. Turkish Cypriots (T/Cs), on the other hand, actively sought greater involvement from the international community, especially in easing the "isolation" of their community. From UN Special Advisor Alexander Downer, the Codel received a cautiously optimistic picture of the negotiations; the ongoing talks are probably "the last best hope for a solution," the Australian envoy stressed. End Summary.

Christofias: No Timetables, No Arbitration

12. (C) Republic of Cyprus President Demetris Christofias informed Berman that G/Cs want a "Cypriot solution" to the island's division, not a foreign one. The 2004 Annan Plan -- which was "imposed from the outside" -- had been a bitter pill for Greek Cypriots. The time was right for a solution, Christofias continued, since he and T/C leader Mehmet Ali Talat, a fellow left-wing politician, had a history of fighting together for the rights of ordinary people and for rapprochement. "If I were alone with Talat, we'd solve this problem," Christofias declared, alluding to the alleged invisible hand of Turkey. Big differences between the two sides remained, however, on the structure of the federal executive and on property claims. In spite of any disagreements between the G/C and T/C sides, the bigger problem was Turkey and especially its military establishment, the G/C leader contended. While Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul generally support a federal solution for Cyprus and want to align Turkey with Europe, the Turkish "Deep State" had different ideas. Christofias urged Berman to ensure the USG and P-5 remained supportive of the Republic of Cyprus in its drive to reach a solution and requested that the international community not push G/Cs to accept strict timetables or arbitration. It would be a "disaster" to repeat the mistakes of the Annan Plan, Christofias concluded, "since no one can impose how we are going to live."

Kyprianou: "Process is Moving...Even Though Pace is Slow"

13. (C) Foreign Minister Markos Kyprianou urged the Codel not to read too much into the slow pace of the negotiations. The process was moving slowly, he explained, but the subject matter was difficult and the positions distant. As long as time was not being wasted, the process should be allowed to continue under its current framework. Kyprianou clarified that in his role as Foreign Minister, he was not involved directly in the negotiation process. On Turkey's role, he was concerned as to whether the GOT was on the same page as the Turkish military. Should a solution be put to a referendum, however, Kyprianou expected it would be impossible for the Turkish military to work against it.

Nami: "Ready to Regain Our Place in the World's Family"

14. (C) Meeting the Codel one day prior to Secretary Clinton's meeting with T/C leader Mehmet Ali Talat, Chief Turkish Cypriot Negotiator Ozdil Nami and "Presidential Advisor" Kutlay Erk thanked the Members for increased USG interest in Cyprus. Stating that "we are ready to regain our place in the world's family," Nami hailed the "quick, successful" start to the negotiations, which already had a firm basis in the mutually agreed bizonal, bicomunal federal solution with political equality for the two communities, and a single international personality, citizenship, and sovereignty for the reunified island. While admitting some differences existed between the two sides, Erk ruled out any suggestion that the T/Cs favored a confederation of prior independent states. With three of six core negotiating areas already covered and a good amount of convergence tallied, Nami added,

NICOSIA 00000278 002 OF 002

a first reading of the issues should be completed by early May; this would be followed by a month-long second reading. After this, another two or three months will be devoted to a give-and-take period, after which an agreement should be ready to be put to a referendum, hopefully by the end of the year.

15. (C) Nami told Berman there were two main sticking points in the negotiations: property and the question of how to elect a president. Turkey and its troops were not holding up negotiations, he assured; no one should question Ankara's desire for a solution, since it had already "declared openly" that it wanted a solution and supported the Annan Plan. Stressing that G/Cs had less motivation to find a solution, with its only "big" motivating factor being the property issue, Nami said the Talat-Clinton meeting would send an important message to the G/Cs, namely, that they could not "hold T/Cs hostage" or keep them isolated from the international community. Erk and Nami urged Berman to push for greater international involvement in the negotiations, whether facilitation, mediation or arbitration. In response to a question from the Chairman, Nami stated that a symbolic number of Turkish troops must be allowed to stay in Cyprus in order to satisfy T/C fears of G/C domination and in so doing assure a T/C "yes" vote in any referendum. "We are dealing with a population four times larger than ours; without a security force, T/Cs wouldn't feel secure in their homes," he asserted.

Downer: "Flashes of Pragmatism"

16. (C) UN Special Advisor Alexander Downer told the Codel that if the settlement negotiations did not succeed now, they might not ever. While admitting that there had been disagreements between the two sides, he was cautiously optimistic due to the strong commitment of the two leaders. Downer contended that the most difficult issues were property and the ongoing presence of Turkish troops after a solution. On the latter, he thought that, should the G/Cs obtain a favorable "border" delineation between the two constituent

states, they might be amenable to a small number of Turkish troops remaining on island. Downer remained concerned that the sides faced difficulty in "making the sale" and convincing their communities to vote "yes" in a referendum, with the G/Cs more of a question mark than the T/Cs. Downer told the Codel that the U.S. enjoyed a great deal of leverage with Turkey due to the two countries' strong and multifaceted relationship. For the U.S., Downer had two suggestions: first, the U.S. should not appoint a special representative to Cyprus, as this would suggest to G/Cs that it was planning to intervene in the negotiations; and second, the U.S. Congress should not pass an Armenian genocide resolution, as this would sour relations with Turkey and cause it to adopt a harder-line on Cyprus.

17. (U) Codel Berman did not have an opportunity to clear this message before departing.
Urbancic